

# Press Release

## HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

### Office of the County Executive



#### PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe  
Harford"

#### EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,  
Building for the Future"

#### EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

#### ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining  
Harford's Prosperity"

#### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our  
Environment"

#### QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is  
Important to Harford  
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 3, 2013

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### County Executive Craig Issues Statement Regarding Harford's Compliance with State-Mandated Rain Tax

(Bel Air, MD) - - Harford County Executive David R. Craig has issued the following statement regarding the county's compliance with the state-mandated collection of a stormwater remediation fee, a measure that the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed into law last year:

*Recently I received Harford County Bill 13-12 on my desk, approved by the County Council after having been introduced at the request of my administration. This is the county legislation for a stormwater fee, also rightly referred to as the Rain Tax, which is required based on a law that the Maryland General Assembly passed back in April of 2012. The state law requires Harford and nine other jurisdictions in the state to levy fees on developed land by this coming July 1, and to use the funds raised on stormwater management projects.*

*The legislation that was passed here in Harford County pursuant to this state law places a fee of \$12.50 per residential tax account for next year, and a fee of 70 cents for every 500 square feet of impervious area for commercial properties. Farms and nonprofits will only pay the residential rate, and properties within a municipality are not subject to the fees. It will be possible to get up to a 100% credit for doing remediation on one's property. These amounts for next year represent 10% of the fees that were calculated as being necessary for complying with federal and state stormwater requirements.*

*The County Council also created a task force that will study how the fee is collected and the funds spent, and will recommend a course of action for the years to come. I commend and thank the County Council for working with my administration on this difficult issue, and I fully support their task force to further study this heavy-handed state mandate.*

*For Harford County, it is estimated that we will have to spend a minimum of \$10 million per year beyond what we already do in order to work toward meeting our federal and state guidelines for managing urban runoff into the Chesapeake Bay. There is no easy or painless way to raise such a large amount of additional money, and as a result, the effects of these fees on taxpayers would be severe.*

( more )

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*As I said last year in a newspaper op-ed, before most people even knew that the state had passed this law, stormwater and urban runoff from Maryland are the source of only around 5 percent of the sediment and 2 percent of the nitrogen and phosphorus flowing into the Bay. Are the benefits to the Bay worth the strain that the implementation of these improvements will cause for our working families and the young adults trying to buy their first homes? ([\*The Gazette, "When enough is enough," Sept. 21, 2012\*](#))*

*While we all share a desire for a clean, healthy, and vibrant Bay, this desire must be tempered by a consideration of what we can afford when Marylanders face high unemployment, lower incomes, and tighter household budgets.*

*Clearly something is amiss here. And as long as we have leaders in Washington and Annapolis who have no concept of the financial decisions that individuals, families, and businesses have to make on a daily basis, things are sadly not going to improve.*

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"Preserving Harford's past; promoting Harford's future"